

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE NEW YEAR.

I saw the gates of the Celestial Land
Uplifted, and the everlasting doors
Opened before a Throne.

So marvellous
In grandeur and in beauty was the scene,
That human language hath no words in which
Its glory may be told.

Before the Throne
The Old Year stood, with grave and solemn mien
Waiting the judgment; and beside him knelt
The New Year, in the attitude of prayer.
And, while I stood and wondered, lo! he spoke;
And the broad streams of splendor from the throne
Bore to my eager ear his earnest words
Of supplication. Thus the New Year prayed:

“Vouchsafe, O King of kings, and Lord of lords,
To give me wisdom, strength and fortitude
To do with all fidelity the work
To which Thou callest me, whate’er it be;
Whether of joy or sorrow, peace or pain;
Whether in tempest, and in wilderness,
Or in the calm, and in the smiling field.

“If Thou shouldst deem it best to try my soul
With fire, or sword, or other dreadful thing,
Oh! strengthen me to bear it patiently,
And bravely fight the battles of Thy truth,
And give me safe deliverance from all
The perils into which my pathway leads.

“Or if Thou wilt not order that I bear
Any heroic burden, under which
I might achieve a martyr’s sacred fame;
But that my troubles shall be little things

Too small for strength or courage—such as fret
 And chafe the spirit with temptations sore—
 Oh ! give me patience, cheerfulness, and hope,
 To bear and overcome them, though there be
 No outward glory in my victory,
 Nor aught to lift me up in human eyes.

“And oh ! my King, grant that, throughout the world,
 My reign may be distinguished by increase
 Of peace among the nations, and good-will
 Among the men of all communities.
 Grant that there be no war to dye the seas
 With human blood, or desolate the land
 With carnage. But may ev’ry people beat
 Their swords to ploughshares, spears to pruning-hooks,—
 And every field, by war made desolate,
 Be sweet with bloom, and rich with growing grain ;
 And every spot where ruined houses lie,
 Ring with the laugh of children, and the song
 Of maiden, waiting lover’s step and voice.

“And oh ! my Father, most abundantly
 Give me the disposition and the means
 To help the poor and the unfortunate ;—
 To aid them, not alone by kindly words,
 But with relief of urgent present needs,
 And means and opportunities to rise
 To better state, in which they may provide
 By their own work for their necessities.

“And grant me, Lord, most potent influence
 To heal domestic discord everywhere ;
 To lessen envy, pride, and selfishness ;
 To check extravagance and indolence ;
 To turn estranged affection to its own ;
 To bring the erring back to virtue’s ways ;
 To foster love, and truth, and industry ;
 To brighten all the blessed charms of home ;
 To warm all hearts with holy charity ;
 To make the young obedient and pure ;
 To make the old benevolent and wise.

“And, gracious Governor of Nations, grant
 That all who make, expound, or execute
 The laws of human government, may be
 Inspired by Thee with purpose to obey
 The righteous mandate of the golden rule ;
 To serve the truth, by doing what is good ;
 To seek their fame in the prosperity,
 And happiness and glory of the lands
 O’er which, by Thy permission, they preside.

"And above all, O Father, King, and Lord !
 Grant me to lead Thy creatures to Thy throne ;
 To fill their hearts with Thy celestial love ;
 To fill their minds with Thy celestial truth ;
 To fill their lives with Thy celestial power ;
 And thus, with Thine own glory, fill the world."

I saw the radiant face of the New Year
 Uplifted to the Lord, and heard him say,
 "Amen! O King of kings, O Lord of lords!"

I heard no more his earnest words of prayer ;
 I saw no more the vision of the Throne ;
 But from the world, upswelling like the tone
 Of a most grand and solemn anthem, came
 The echo of the New Year's prayer : AMEN ! AMEN !

My grateful heart took up the sweet refrain ;
 My grateful voice, the blessed anthem caught ;
 And my exultant soul re-echoed back
 The closing words of the angelic prayer :
 AMEN ! O FATHER, KING, AND LORD, AMEN !

CHARLES CARROLL BONNEY.

"TANTE FRITZCHEN."

The present number of *The Open Court* contains a thoughtful sketch entitled "Tante Fritzchen," which is not only interesting to the psychologist as delineating an original character, but also to the philosopher and theologian as discussing the problem of immortality. The heroine of the sketch has a definite idea on the subject, and it is developed with great lucidity by the author, Hans Hoffmann, one of the rising novelists of Germany. The solution appears rather negative, and seems to be a flat denial of immortality, but a closer inspection will prove that it only criticises a wrong conception of the nature of the continuance of after-life,—a conception which we may fairly grant is very common throughout the world.

We may assume that our own views are known to the readers of *The Open Court*, and may abstain here from restating them ; but we would say that answers and criticisms of Dr. Hoffmann's exposition of the problem will be welcome, on the condition that they be brief and to the point, and they must state the positive aspect of immortality, setting forth what will survive after death and in which way.

Hans Hoffmann, the author of "Tante Fritzchen," was born in Stettin in 1848 ; he attended the Gymnasium in his native city, studied classical philology and Germanistics in Bonn, Berlin, and Halle, in addition making a specialty of literature and the history of literature. He took his degree at Halle in 1871, and was appointed teacher in his native city. He interrupted his career for a journey through Italy, Greece, and Turkey, and held positions as a teacher successively at the Gymnasias at Stolp, Dantzig, and Berlin. He gave up his profession as an educator for the more congenial work of an author and editor. He published in 1884 the *Deutsche Illustrierte Zeitung*. His present residence is Wernigerode, in the Harz Mountains.